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Joint Inspection Unit

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Reforming the Field Service category of personnel in United Nations peace operations

Support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system

Strengthening the investigations function in United Nations system organizations

Enhancing the governance oversight role: structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on reforming the Field Service category of personnel in United Nations peace operations (A/57/78), support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2002/3),[1] strengthening the investigations function in United Nations system organizations (A/56/282) and enhancing the governance oversight role: structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports (A/57/58). In the course of its consideration of the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Advisory Committee reviewed the related comments of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/57/78/Add.1, A/56/282/Add.1 and A/57/58/Add.1. The Committee also considered reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on management of buildings (A/56/274) and administration of justice (JIU/REP/2002/5).[1] The Committee will take these reports into account when it considers the related subjects, including reports of the Secretary-General on the capital master plan (A/57/285) and the reform of the administration of justice in the United Nations Secretariat (A/56/800).

Reforming the Field Service category of personnel in United Nations peace operations

2. The Advisory Committee notes that the findings of the Joint Inspection Unit report (A/57/78) are addressed to the United Nations Secretariat, which is already in the process of reforming the field service.

3. The Advisory Committee notes that recommendation 1 of the Joint Inspection Unit on

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reforming the Field Service category provides, inter alia, that the Secretary-General would be requested to prepare and submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a detailed and comprehensive proposal for the future composition of the Field Service category of personnel. As indicated in paragraph 2 of the related report of the Secretary-General (A/57/78/Add.1), the Secretariat is in the process of reviewing the Field Service category on the basis of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809), which first called for the revision of the Field Service category to better match the present and future demands of field operations. Moreover, as indicated in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report, after the completion of consultations with relevant offices and Field Service staff representatives, any necessary analysis of the requirements in the field and the inventory of skills and competencies of current field staff, the Secretary-General will submit a comprehensive proposal to the General Assembly for the future composition and conditions of service of the Field Service category, as suggested by the Joint Inspection Unit.

4. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit on reforming the Field Service category of personnel in United Nations peace operations. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to expedite the completion of the review of the Field Service category and to submit his comprehensive proposals in this regard to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, as recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit. The Committee will follow up on the implementation of the recommendations in the context of its review of proposed requirements for peacekeeping operations in February 2004.

Support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system

5. The Advisory Committee notes that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/245 of 24 December 2001, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2002/3) includes an annex that contains comments from participating organizations. **The Committee is of the view, in this regard, that lessons learned from this innovation need to be examined in order to ascertain the extent to which this procedure could expedite the consideration of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit by the various legislative bodies to which the reports might be addressed.**

6. The Advisory Committee notes from the annex to the report that the general thrust of the report towards harmonization of policy principles related to support costs in the United Nations system organizations was well received and welcomed by the secretariats of most participating organizations. **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. The Committee requests that the introduction to the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 contain information on policy changes with regard to support costs that need to be made in order to implement the relevant recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.** The Committee will revert to this subject during its review of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

Strengthening the investigations function in United Nations system organizations

7. The Advisory Committee observes that the Committee for Programme and Coordination has recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in the manner indicated in paragraphs 357 and 358 of its report.[2]

8. With regard to recommendation 4 of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/56/282), the Advisory Committee points out that the use of external contractors should be in compliance with the decisions and criteria adopted by the General Assembly and other relevant intergovernmental bodies.

Enhancing the governance oversight role: structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports

9. The Advisory Committee notes that recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/57/58) are addressed to governing bodies

and recommendation 4 is addressed to the executive heads. With respect to recommendation 1, the Committee points out that the General Assembly has already decided that thematic reports of the Joint Inspection Unit should be considered under the relevant agenda items of the Assembly (see General Assembly resolution 50/233, para. 5). **The Committee is of the view that the steps outlined in recommendation 1 might give rise to complications and it cautions, therefore, against adopting mechanical procedures that might be difficult to implement.**

10. Recommendations 2 and 3 concern legislative machinery; the Advisory Committee points out that the issue of the number, composition and terms of reference of subsidiary legislative bodies with oversight responsibility is a political matter that is within the purview of the General Assembly.

11. With regard to recommendation 4, the Advisory Committee points out that the related procedure is already under implementation in the United Nations.

Notes

[1] To be issued as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

[2] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/57/16).